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229 EXPRESS

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City Ambulance Gives Bargaining Committee 100% Strike Mandate

Below; It was standing room only at the October 5th meeting; Bargaining Committee Member Jeff Monas addresses the membership....more on page 2



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

City Homes Redevelopment Campaign	page 2
2004 Women's Conference Report.....	page 2
Versa/Roseview Bargaining Update.....	page 2
Options Northwest Facing Possible Home Closures.....	page 3
Contracting out in Kitchener Hospital.....	page 3
Lakehead Public School Closures.....	page 3
YES says YES to CAW Local 229!.....	page 4
CAW Holds Rally in Terrace Bay to Support CUPE.....	page 4

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Paramedics Give Bargaining Committee 100% Strike Mandate/ Oct. 04

On October 5, 2004 the employees of Thunder Bay Emergency Medical Services CAW Local 229 (Paramedic Unit) voted 100% in favor of strike action, if necessary, to support their bargaining committee. Negotiations have been ongoing with the employer and up to this point have been unable to obtain a collective agreement. Both sides met with a conciliator on October 1, 2004 and a No Board Report will be issued. No strike date has been set but the Union will be in a legal strike position at 12:01 a.m. on October 25, 2004. Paramedics in Thunder Bay deserve an increase that is in line with increases received by other paramedics in Ontario. Other meetings will take with a conciliator to try and resolve outstanding issues. Paramedics here earn about \$24 per hour, said Jeff Monas, bargaining committee representative for CAW Local 229. Monas said the 40 full-time staff and 20 part-time employees are seeking around \$30 an hour, which would give them parity with paramedics in other cities such as Sudbury and London. So far the city has offered about two per cent over two years, which works out to about 48 cents an hour. In the event of a strike, Monas said the city will not be without ambulance service. Bill 58 gives paramedics the right to strike, he said, as long as three ambulances are operating around the clock with two paramedics in each. That would mean a staff of 24 employees would serve the entire city. Under provincial legislation certain workers are deemed essential. These include doctors, nurses, firefighters, police officers and liquor store workers. Monas said the decreased work force would mean that all transfers of patients would cease and there would be delays to all non-urgent calls. Responses to chest pain and heart attack calls would be top priority.

Roseview/Versa Update/ Oct. 04

With only one outstanding issue, a tentative agreement should be ready soon, reports Local 229 President, Andy Savela. "We expect to be finalizing things soon with the bargaining committees in Toronto, and bringing back a good deal for our members in these units to consider."

City Homes Redevelopment Campaign Continues/ Oct. 04

Support for rebuilding Grandview Lodge and Dawson Court has been steady since a deputation was presented to City Council on Sept. 20, 04. City Councilors reported they will be meeting soon with George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to discuss the city homes. But Andy Savela, CAW Local 229 reports that there are councilors who are obviously very interested in privatizing the homes operations. "When they examine the bottom line they aren't thinking of the residents who live in these homes." He continues, "We need to remind them of their social responsibility and the fact that this redevelopment has been supported by the community."

More information is available on the CAW web site www.caw229.com Everyone is encouraged to contact their elected representatives from this link and let them know that they expect redevelopment and their continued operations of these homes. Several members have attended ward meetings and put forward good arguments that are supported by the majority in attendance. Unit Chairs' Heather Scarcello, Jody Powers and Suzanne Pulice are coordinating the campaign and more information will follow.

2004 Womens Conference Report/Susan Wragg/ "Women's health in Women's Hands" was this years conference theme. CAW National President Buzz Hargrove opened the conference and the support for women's issues was felt very strongly from our leadership.

The conference consisted of several workshops related to women's health, and bargaining for women's health issues. Key note speakers included Sandy White, Children's Aid Society, Helen Connell, ED of London United Way, and CAW Assistant to the President, Peggy Nash.

The opportunity to meet with sisters from across the Country, hearing their stories and challenges and their successes makes one realize how important the support of both the national and local union in our workplace women's issues really is.

The Local 229 Women's Committee meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7:00pm. Everyone is welcome.

OPTION's Northwest Facing Possible Home Closures/ Oct. 04

Options Northwest has implemented regular staff planning meetings to deal with an expected deficit that could result in the closure of up to two of the 16 group homes operated by the organization.

Unit Chair Kathy Atkins reports that the members are particularly concerned about this situation because they believe closing any homes and moving clients would not be in their best interest. "We know that nursing homes are just not appropriate for our clients; they deserve to be in an environment with others who have similar disabilities, and staff who are trained to meet their unique needs." Options' cares for individuals with developmental disabilities in home-like settings, and came about after the closure of Hogarth Hospital and the deinstitutionalization of the patients, mostly young adults who lived there. Atkins continues, "If any of these clients had to be moved to nursing home settings it would completely undo the benefits of this move."

The committee is optimistic that some savings can be realized, and that the new Liberal Government, who has committed to home care, may come through with some funding increases to avoid home closures. Lobbying efforts will be undertaken in partnership with the union and management.

Rally in Kitchener to Protest Contracting Out/ Oct. 04

Katha Fortier, CAW Local 229 VP and President of the CAW Ontario Health Care Council was one of several guest speakers at a rally in Kitchener October 2nd, to protest the contracting out of the housekeeping department at the Grand River Hospital.

Fortier maintains that this creeping privatization that starts hospital by hospital, department by department, must be stopped. "When the First Ministers met on Health Care last month, they forgot to talk about privatization, so it's our job to remind them its still on the agenda." She continues "contracting out to the for-profit sector will erode the wages and benefits in these jobs which will result in higher turnover and hospitals that aren't as clean; and we know this will lead to costly outbreaks; putting profits before patients is simply wrong."

Closures at Lakehead Public Schools/Oct 04/ George Saarinen

There has been a great deal of media over the past few months on the proposed school closures of Lakehead Public Schools. By June 2005, 10 Elementary Schools and 1 Secondary School will close. In 2007 6 elementary and 2 secondary schools will close.

We are told that there are over 4,000 empty student spaces to get rid of at the school board and by closing these schools there will be a savings of several million dollars a year. It is interesting that with the school closures we will lose 11 principals, 11 secretaries and 11 custodians this year alone, not including the half time custodians and secretaries. In 2007 we will lose an additional 8 Principals, 8 Secretaries and 8 Custodians, and many half time custodians and secretaries as well. The Principals make an average on \$90,000 a year; multiplied by 19 closures that alone brings in a savings of 1.7 million dollars a year. My concern is for the custodians and secretaries many will lose their jobs and benefits over the closures. Most of principals will retire on their comfortable pensions, so I have no worry about them.

The Board Office has 5 Superintendents and numerous seconded positions such as teachers, guidance counselors, principals or vice principals who are either assisting the superintendents or leading a variety of special projects for the school board, making at least \$75,000.00. With the cutting of 19 schools do we need a Director and 5 Superintendents and all their assistants? The answer is no. Now is the time to voice your concerns over these school closures; call or email your trustees with you concerns. Even the Ministry of Education is asking the school board to slow down on these closures. Why the rush and why this year? Trustee's can be reached at the web site; <http://www.lhbe.edu.on.ca/ie.htm>

Northern Hospital Bargaining Begins/ Oct. 04/

Master bargaining for the 10 Local 229 Hospital Bargaining Units will begin November 1, 2004 for one week. CAW Assistant to the President, Bob Chernecki plans to open the bargaining and set the stage for a good solid agreement with fair wage increases. Local 1075 from SS Marie will also join the bargaining.



YES Says Yes to CAW/ Oct. 04

Workers at the Youth Employment Services (YES) voted overwhelmingly to join the Canadian Auto Workers Union Local 229. YES employs 35 councilors and clerical workers with offices in Thunder Bay and Nipigon.

Andy Savela, President of Local 229 says that the workers contacted the union regarding concerns about having the resources and support to continue the valuable service they provide. "They researched their options and chose the CAW because our union has experience with public employers, and a strong commitment to working people." He continues, "With our reputation of fighting to protect social services, we were an obvious fit for their workplace." Savela reports that the local union is in discussions with several workplaces wanting to unionize. "They see our progressive efforts on behalf of working people and feel that we can address their issues."

Ontario Needs a Raise Campaign/ Oct. 04

CAW Local 1075 President Paul Pugh, UFCW rep Gerry Morris and Local 229 VP Katha Fortier met with MPP Micheal Gravelle Oct. 7 as part of a province wide lobby to discuss increasing minimum wage, social and disability pensions, and ending the clawback of the National Child Tax Benefit meant for children.

According to Stats Can, in 1976 a single minimum wage earner was 10% below the poverty line. In 2004 the same minimum wage earner is now 25% below the poverty line.

Gravelle agreed that this was not acceptable and agreed to bring forward concerns in the legislature and thanked us for reminding the Liberals of their commitment to the poor while advising us to keep the pressure up.



Members of CAW Local 229 are joined by members of the community and other unions; OSSTF, ONA, PSAC, and COPE in a march to city hall preceding the deputation on the redevelopment of the City Homes Sept. 20, 04



CAW Holds Rally in Support of Striking CUPE workers at North of Superior Programs TERRACE BAY Oct. 6, 04/

Members of CAW Local 229 who work for the Township of Terrace Bay took to the streets, joined by representatives from other unions including OSSTF, OPSEU, OECTA, OPSTF, CPPA, SEIU, and CUPE, in support of striking CUPE workers at North of Superior Programs.

CAW Unit Chair Kathy Pivato says that this community has been without mental health resources for too long. "We are two hours from Thunder Bay; a long way to travel if you need to access these services." She continues, "this will only get worse as winter approaches, so this board needs to get the message that they need to get back to the table soon and return our services." The workers' who have been on strike since June of 2004, have not had a wage increase in almost 8 years. No new negotiations have been set.